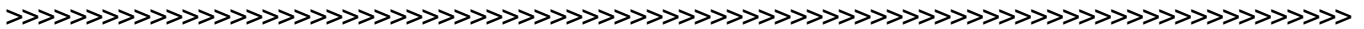
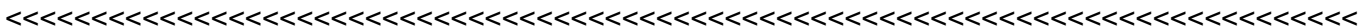




PANHANDLE REGIONAL



RESIDENTIAL SAFE ROOM PROGRAM GUIDELINES AND APPLICATION FORM Phase II – Round 2



RELEASED: APRIL 2011

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Federal Emergency Management Agency*

Panhandle Regional Residential Safe Room Rebate Program Guidelines

The Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (PRPC) is pleased to announce Round 2 of renewed Panhandle Residential Safe Room Rebate Program. This program was first implemented in August of 2006 and between then and the time the first phase ended in October of 2008, 1,415 residential storm shelters were installed in homes across the Texas Panhandle. As with the first program phase, this renewed phase of the Panhandle Residential Safe Room Rebate Program is being funded by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). It is a fairly straight forward program, which can best be explained by breaking down the key elements of the program's title:

Panhandle Regional – This program is only intended to serve the 26-county area of the Texas Panhandle.

Residential – The FEMA/TDEM program rules state the applicants must be the owner occupant, builder or developer of the home in which the safe room is to be built. The rules also require the home be a single family dwelling that lies outside a FEMA or locally mapped floodplain. In limited situations, this program can assist with the installation of safe rooms in multi-family dwellings (town homes and/or condominiums) provided the safe room units are exclusively for occupants on a ground floor.

Safe Room/Storm Shelter – For the purpose of this program, a safe room/storm shelter is an above or below ground unit built to the FEMA 320 design standards. A safe room built according to these standards is expected to withstand the forces imposed on it by extreme winds without failing. However, FEMA itself does not test or certify materials or systems used in the construction of safe rooms. Therefore, the TDEM recognizes two non-profit organizations that maintain quality verification processes and procedures that ensure that their members are producing and installing safe rooms that meet or exceed the FEMA 320 standards. These two organizations are: 1) the National Storm Shelter Association (NSSA) and 2) the American Tornado Shelter Association (ATSA). **The only units authorized for rebate support under this program will be units certified as meeting the FEMA 320 standards by either the NSSA or by the ATSA.**



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Rebate Program – This is a 50:50 matching program that will provide home owners, developers and builders a rebate of up to \$3,000 to offset the cost of installing an NSSA or ATSA-certified safe room/storm shelter in a residence. **Homeowners, developers and builders must first apply for a rebate and then receive a written confirmation of rebate award from the PRPC before being assured of receiving this assistance.**

The steps for requesting and potentially receiving a rebate are described below.

Step 1: *You should determine if the residence in which the safe room/storm shelter would be installed lies within a FEMA or locally-mapped floodplain.*

FEMA prohibits the use of these rebate dollars to support the cost of installing safe rooms or storm shelters in residences that lie inside a “floodplain”. For the purpose of this requirement, homes built within a FEMA designated Special Flood Hazard Area (or Zone) are considered to be in the “floodplain”.

There are a several ways this determination can be made. Rebate applicants can:

1. Contact their local city code enforcement officer or county floodplain administrator to determine if their property is in a Special Flood Hazard Area; or Go to FEMA’s website at: <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/map/firm.shtm>, then click on the link marked **Find a FIRM** (Flood Insurance Rate Map) and search for the property by entering your address in the search box on the left-hand side of the page or by looking under the tab marked Map Search. Use the “View” option not the “Buy” option when you view your FIRM. If you conduct your own map search, your property is only ineligible if it lies inside one of the colored or highlighted Special Flood Hazard areas shown on the FEMA map; or
2. Contact PRPC program staff for assistance in making that determination.

Step 2: *On the Rebate Application form, you’ll certify, by signature, that you are the owner occupant, builder, or developer of the residence in which the unit is to be installed. These terms are defined below.*

- *Owner occupant* – you legally own the home and currently live in the residence in which the unit will be installed.
- *Builder* – You’re building the home in which the unit will be installed either for your own occupancy or as a contractor for another owner occupant/developer.
- *Developer* – You’re developing a property or properties, contracting with a builder to install a unit in a residence for sale to another owner occupant.

Step 3: *Complete and submit your rebate application.*

The application will take about 5 minutes to complete. When you’ve finished the form, please sign it and then mail it to the address printed below. **The originally signed form must be submitted because this will serve as your certification that the information contained in the application is true.**

Submit your completed form to:

Panhandle Regional Planning Commission
Attn: Elizabeth Thomas
PO Box 9257
Amarillo, TX 79105

If your application is selected for rebate, you will receive a letter of notification from the PRPC authorizing you to proceed with the unit installation.

This program is retroactive to November 10, 2010. If you're applying for a unit installed after that date and your application is selected for rebate, you will receive a letter of notification from the PRPC stating that you will receive a rebate on the already-installed unit if all other conditions of the rebate program are met (jump to **Step 5**).

Step 4: *Identify the NSSA or ATSA-certified contractor who will provide and install the unit in your home.*

As with anything else, safe rooms/storm shelters come in a variety of shapes and sizes. Some sit above ground, others lie below ground. However, for the purpose of this program and because it is a requirement of the TDEM, any unit on which a rebate is paid under this program must be certified by either the National Storm Shelter Association (NSSA) or the American Tornado Shelter Association (ATSA).

Both organizations maintain a current listing of certified contractors on their websites. Those websites can be found at:

National Storm Shelter Association:

<http://www.nssa.cc/ProducerRoster.php> (under "Producer Members" on the "NSSA Members by Grade" tab)

American Tornado Shelter Association:

www.americantornadoshelterassociation.org (under the "Membership" tab)

Residents are encouraged to contact several different contractors to determine which unit will best suit their needs. Of all the steps listed in these guidelines, this one is perhaps the most important. Your NSSA or ATSA-approved contractor will apply a uniquely numbered seal to your safe room once it's installed. This seal will stand as proof that your unit does, in fact, meet the FEMA 320 standards. **Under this program, rebates can only be made on shelters that bear either a NSSA or an ATSA seal.**

Step 5: *Complete the installation of the unit and submit your documentation per the instructions provided in the PRPC letter of notification you will receive authorizing you to proceed with the unit installation.*

To enable the PRPC to process the rebate, you will need to submit the following record documents once the unit has been installed:

- A signed statement from you that your participation in this program has been strictly voluntary (a copy is shown in the guideline attachments);
- the NSSA or ATSA shelter seal number from the unit installed; and
- copies of all invoices received and payments made by the applicant.

FEMA/TDEM requires the coordinate positioning of each home receiving a unit under this program be recorded.

As a step in the rebate payment process, PRPC staff will make a visit to each unit site, verify the existence of the unit and record the longitude/latitude coordinates of the residence in which the unit has been installed. The street address of the residence will be provided to the local 9-1-1 dispatch to speed potential search and rescue operations following a storm(s). As a provision of rebate payment, the owner occupant, builder or developer will have to agree to this data gathering step by the PRPC.

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

How many units are available under the Panhandle Regional Residential Safe Room Rebate Program?

The PRPC originally received grant funding for at least 350 safe room rebates region-wide. With Round 1 of this program, 200 rebates were awarded; temporarily leaving 150 rebates available for Round 2. However, the PRPC has since requested additional program funding from FEMA and we anticipate that request will soon be officially approved.

Our request for supplement funding ***may*** be approved prior to the deadline set for the receipt of the Round 2 applications. However, we can't guarantee that will happen nor can we guarantee that our request for additional funding will be approved. We'll simply have to work with the number of rebates we have available at the time the Round 2 selection process is conducted.

How will applications be selected for participation in this rebate program?

For the purpose of the Round 2 selection process, the PRPC will use a region-wide lottery system. Applications will be accepted from across the Panhandle and placed into a common applicant pool until the cut-off date listed in the Round 2 timetable. At which time, applications will be randomly selected from the Round 2 application pool until the total number of rebates available at the time have been awarded.

Any remaining applications will be retained by the PRPC with the expectation that there will be future rounds. Any resident whose application can not be awarded under Round 2 will be notified to that effect.

There are no income requirements to participate in this program. The only conditions of eligibility are 1) that the applicant is the developer of the home or the owner of the home {or mobile home} in which the shelter is being installed and 2) that the shelter installed meets the standards for a tornado shelter as established by FEMA.

How will the rebates be made?

Unless otherwise instructed by the owner/developer/builder, once the safe room/storm shelter installation has been successfully completed, the rebate payment will be made to the NSSA or ATSA-certified contractor who installed the unit. How will this work? Here is an example.

An NSSA or ATSA certified contractor installs a safe room for a PRPC-approved applicant for a total cost of \$5,500.00. The contractor presents the invoice to the owner. (Remember, this is a 50:50 match program with the maximum rebate amount being \$3,000.00.) So, the owner will pay the contractor \$2,750.00 and then submit the documents listed under Step 5 above to the PRPC. Once the PRPC has verified the existence of the shelter and confirmed its NSSA or ATSA certification, a check would then be sent to the contractor in the amount of \$2,750.00.

If the owner/developer/builder chooses to pay the NSSA or ATSA-certified contractor in full and then submit the necessary rebate documents to the PRPC, the rebate payment will be made to the owner/developer/builder. **The payment election will be made at the time the rebate documents are submitted to the PRPC by the owner/developer/builder.**

Once the PRPC has received all the documents specified above, it will take 30 days or less to conduct the site visit and remit the rebate payment to the appropriate party.

Who can I contact for more information about this program?

For more information about this program, please contact Elizabeth Thomas or John Kiehl at the PRPC by calling (806) 372-3381.

ATTACHMENT 1

REBATE APPLICATION FORM



Panhandle Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Program Rebate Application Form

The Panhandle Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Program is being funded under a grant provided by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) through the Texas Division of Emergency Management (TDEM). This is a rebate program designed to help homeowners and developers offset the cost of installing above or below ground shelters, meeting the FEMA 320 construction standards, in homes throughout the 26 counties of the Texas Panhandle. Application completion instructions are on the back of this form.

Completion of this application form simply serves as your notice of interest and desire to participate in this program. Your application will be processed in accordance with the criteria established in the Panhandle Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Rebate Program Guidelines. Please submit your application per the instructions given below. Should you have any questions, please contact Elizabeth Thomas or John Kiehl at (806) 372-3381.

Applicant Information (Home Owner Name):

Mr. or Ms.?: _____
First Name: _____
Last Name: _____
Suffix: _____

Applicant Information (Mailing Address):

Street #: _____
Or PO Box: _____
City: _____
Zip Code: _____

Applicant Information (Contact Information):

Day Phone: _____
Home Phone: _____
Or Cell: _____
Email: _____

Applicant Information (Property Information):

911 Address: _____
City: _____
Zip Code: _____
County: _____

Applicant Information (for Developers Only):

Subdivision: _____
Section/Lot: _____
Block/Abstract: _____

What type of Dwelling will this unit be installed in?

Mobile Home _____
Existing Single Family: _____
Existing Multi-Family: * _____
Planned New Construction: _____

★ If Existing, what year was the home built? _____
If New Construction, what type is planned?

* – Owner occupied multi-family dwellings such as condominiums or town homes are limited to occupants on the ground floor.

Have you confirmed that the Dwelling is not located in a FEMA or locally-mapped flood plain?

YES, I have confirmed that the Dwelling is not located in a FEMA or locally-mapped flood plain.

Are you requesting a Rebate on a unit that has already been installed? YES NO

If YES, what date was the unit installation completed?

If YES, which contractor installed the unit?

If YES, did the contractor provide you with an NSSA or ATSA certification for the unit? YES NO

I, the undersigned, have carefully reviewed this form and the Program Guidelines and understand the information therein. To the best of my knowledge and belief the information I have provided on this form is true and accurate.

Signature of Owner or Developer Date

Submit your completed and **signed** form to:

Panhandle Regional Planning Commission (or if you prefer, PRPC)
Attn: E. Thomas
PO Box 9257
Amarillo, TX 79105

FORM COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS

Applicant Information (Home Owner Name):

This section must be completed by the owner of the home in which the safe room would be built. Provide a response to all the fields listed. Write "N/A" if a field does not apply.

Applicant Information (Mailing Address):

Provide the primary address you use to receive mail.

Applicant Information (Contact Information):

Provide a response to all the fields listed. Write "N/A" if a field does not apply.

Applicant Information (Property Information):

Provide a response to all the fields listed. List the designated 9-1-1 address of the home in which the safe room would be installed.

Applicant Information (for Developers Only):

This Section is **only** to be completed for new homes being built by developers/builders. Provide a legal location description of the home in which the safe room is to be built. A separate form must be completed for each new home in which the developer/builder proposes to construct a safe room/storm shelter.

What type of Dwelling will this unit be installed in?

Write "Yes" next to the option that best describes the type of dwelling in which the safe room would be built. ★ **VERY IMPORTANT:** For existing homes, please include the date of the home's construction. We may need to obtain photographs of homes built prior to 1962.

Have you confirmed that the Dwelling is not located in a FEMA or locally-mapped flood plain?

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) prohibits the use of these Residential Safe Room Rebate program funds to construct safe rooms in homes that lie within a FEMA or locally-mapped flood plain. Applicants must ensure that the homes in which the safe room is to be installed lies outside of a designated flood plain. FEMA depicts designated flood hazard areas on documents referred to as Flood Insurance Rate Maps (or FIRMS). FIRMS can be viewed at: <http://www.fema.gov/hazard/map/firm.shtm> under the link marked **Find a FIRM**. The information provided here by the applicant will be confirmed as part of the application review process.

Are you requesting a Rebate on a unit that has already been installed?

The start of this Residential Safe Room Rebate Program has been retroactively set at Nov. 10, 2010. Any units installed in the 26 county area of the Panhandle after that date **may** be eligible for rebate of up to \$3,000.00 provided:

1. The home in which the safe room was installed lies outside a FEMA or locally-mapped flood plain;
2. The unit was installed by a contractor/vendor certified by the National Storm Shelter Association (NSSA) or the American Tornado Shelter Association (ATSA);
3. The unit that was installed has been issued either a NSSA or a ATSA certification/seal number; and
4. The application was selected for participation in this rebate program.

Funding for this Residential Safe Room Rebate Program is limited. It's unlikely that every Rebate request can be met. All requests will be processed in accordance with the considerations found in the Panhandle Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Program Guidelines

ATTACHMENT 2

**Phase II – Round 2
PROGRAM SCHEDULE**

Program Implementation Schedule

Date	Implementation Activity
April 29, 2011 ¹	Announced Start Date of Round 2 of the renewed Panhandle Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Rebate program. This is the date on which the PRPC will officially begin receiving new applications for rebates. Applicants can submit rebate requests for NSSA or ATSA-certified units installed after Nov. 10, 2010 or for units that have yet to be installed.
May 27, 2011	Deadline for submission of Residential Safe Room Rebate applications. Applications must be received by 5:00 p.m. on this date in order to be eligible for lottery participation.
May 31, 2011	PRPC will complete the lottery selections for all rebates currently available at the time.
May 31, 2011	Texas Historical Commission (THC) review submission. This step will only be required in limited cases. By law, the THC must review properties scheduled to receive a safe room/shelter that are 50 years of age or older to ensure that no inappropriate changes will be made to a historic property. The PRPC has received a conditional waiver from the THC that will limit this review only to those cases where the proposed shelter is being built as an attachment to home that is 50 years of age or older.
June 10, 2011 ²	PRPC will issue each homeowner selected through the lottery a letter confirming the award of their requested rebate.
On-going through November 10, 2012	It is anticipated that there will be more applications received than there are rooms available. PRPC will maintain a record of unmet requests in the order in which they were selected by lottery. Should a previously selected homeowner later decide to decline the rebate or should TDEM provide additional funding for this program, other residents will be selected, in the order in which their applications were first drawn, for rebate.
November 10, 2012	The regional program will have to be concluded by this date; any receipts submitted for payment after this date will not be paid by the PRPC

¹ - Applications received by the PRPC since the end of Round 1 will be considered under Round 2. If the PRPC has already received your application, you do not need to submit another.

² - Applicants selected for rebate who intend to physically attach a safe room onto the exterior of a home that is 50 years of age or older should expect some delays in receiving this letter while the THC historical review process is completed.

ATTACHMENT 3

VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION STATEMENT

- * *This form will have to be signed and submitted as part of the rebate payment process.
This form **does not** have to be submitted at the time the application is filed.*

Signed Statement of Voluntary Participation

As witnessed by my signature below, I _____, owner, developer,
Print your name
or builder of the residence located at _____,
Print the physical address
in _____ hereby certify that my participation in the Panhandle
Print the City and Zip Code
Regional Residential Safe Room/Storm Shelter Rebate Program has been voluntary. I
further authorize the PRPC to visit my residence to physically verify the room has been
constructed, to record the affixed NSSA or ATSA seal number on the installed safe
room/storm shelter and to the capture of the required Lat/Long information on the
shelter location as required by FEMA.

Along with this statement, I am also submitting the following documents necessary to
process the rebate payment for my safe room/storm shelter:

- the NSSA or ATSA shelter seal number from the unit installed which is _____;
and
- copies of all invoices received and payments by me for my safe room/storm shelter.

Based on the invoice/payment information I've submitted with this statement, I elect to
have the rebate payment of \$ _____¹ paid to _____.²

Signature of Owner/Developer/Builder

Date

¹ – 50% of the documented invoice cost in an amount not to exceed \$3,000.00.

² – If the owner/developer/builder has documented that all invoices have already been paid in full then fill in the name of the owner/developer/builder. If any portion of the invoice costs has not been fully paid to the safe room/storm shelter contractor/installer then list the name of the contractor/installer who is to receive the rebate payment.